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WELL-PLANNED 4-H GARDENS PAY WELL

A radio talk by Prof. C. P. Close, United States Department of Agriculture delivered in the National 4-H Club Radio Program, March 2, 1935, and broadcast by a network of 59 associate NBC radio stations.

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I am very grateful for the privilege of being on this 4-H program today, particularly because Wilma Ryan has told us about successful garden demonstrations. I wonder if Wilma knows how many garden demonstrations the club boys and girls carry on each year? We do not yet have the records for 1934, but in 1933 they completed 112,571 garden demonstrations. These gardens fed at least half a million people during the summer, autumn, and part of the winter, and it will never be known how well they paid.

My subject is "Well-Planned 4-H Gardens Pay Well". By "well-planned" I understand that the rows should be straight; the short growing crops be planted together and the tall ones by themselves so they do not shade the short ones; the seed planted at the right time with a succession of crops always coming on; all rubbish and plants through fruiting cleaned off; spraying or dusting material ready for instant use to control insects and diseases; and if it can be done have water available to irrigate the garden. The perennial plants like asparagus and rhubarb should be at one side next to strawberries and bush fruits. A few flowers may be slipped in any place around the borders.

The "pay well" part of my subject does not mean pay in money only. It means pay in joy, satisfaction, contentment, happiness, and health. I can easily forget my troubles when I am working in my garden, and so can you.

The money side is mighty important, however, and I like to boast about the hundreds of dollars the club boys and girls get out of their garden crops. First I want to tell about a real little girl in Oklahoma who planted a garden and wrote this rhyme about it --

I planted me a garden  
And thought that it was fine  
But when it came to hoeing it  
I had to change my mind.

Another little girl in the same State said "Well, I had 19 pounds of radishes, 29 pounds of lettuce, and 14 bushes of tomatoes and each bush had 3 gallons of tomatoes on it".

Listen to what a club girl in Arkansas wrote. "My garden gave me a profit of \$137.37. The experience I gained in gardening and canning will be of great value to me all my life. The fruit and vegetables are a great benefit to my family. I am proud of my work. I have a nice pantry store and like to help my mother".

(over)

We will now hop to Minnesota where things are done in a big way. When I was a boy I heard a story about pumpkin vines growing so fast out there that they dragged the pumpkins all over the prairie. When a farmer wanted a pumpkin for pumpkin pie, he had a cowboy mount a pony and chase a pumpkin until he could lasso it. That is a whopper and I never did believe it.

Here is a Minnesota story, though, that is really true. Teckla Nelson, the 1933 State garden champion, had a little garden covering one-fifth of an acre. She grew 30 different kinds of vegetables and said it furnished fresh vegetables for the family all summer, a surplus for canning and preserving, and 13 different kinds to store for winter use. She had a clear profit of \$136.77. This is equal to the value of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  acres of wheat yielding 25 bushels per acre and selling at \$1.00 per bushel.

A large State like Texas ought to have some big garden stories worth telling and here is one. Inez Cunningham planted 31 varieties of vegetables, and had fresh vegetables every month in the year for her family and to give to neighbors. She canned 330 quarts of 28 different kinds. The profit from this garden was \$233.70. She attributes her great success to starting plants in a hotbed and giving them good attention at all times in the hotbed and in the garden.

I want to tell you about 10,646 girls down in Georgia who cultivated nearly 1,000 acres, one-fourth of it in commercial truck crops and three-fourths in home gardens. Think of the health and happiness these girls brought to more than 10,000 homes of perhaps 50,000 people, and the exquisite joy of dividing between themselves the profit of \$107,305.40 in cash.

These are a few of the splended garden results achieved by club boys and girls. I would like to know more about your success and wish you would be good enough to share your garden records with me. What I would like to know is the size of the garden, the number of people it served, the number of different vegetables grown, and the net value of the crops after the cost of seed, fertilizer, labor, etc., has been deducted. A paragraph giving the story of the garden will be appreciated also. Just mail the material to me at the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

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